Managing Herpes

Herpes is an infection caused by HSV (herpes simplex virus). While being diagnosed with herpes can feel intimidating, understanding this condition is the first step towards taking control of its symptoms. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

**Vocabulary to Know**
Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here’s what they mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>HSV-1 (Herpes simplex type 1)</td>
<td>Commonly causes cold sores, but can cause genital herpes. Transmitted through oral secretions or sores on the skin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSV-2 (Herpes simplex type 2)</td>
<td>The usual cause of genital herpes, but it also can infect the mouth. An infected person may have sores around the genitals or rectum.</td>
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<td>Herpes Labialis</td>
<td>Commonly referred to as cold sores or fever blisters, herpes labialis is the most common symptom of recurrent HSV-1 infection following reemergence of the virus.</td>
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<td>Herpes Genitalis</td>
<td>When symptoms are present, a primary HSV-1 or HSV-2 genital infection causes clusters of inflamed lesions and cysts on the outer surface of the genitals resembling cold sores.</td>
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<td>Herpes Viral Culture</td>
<td>A laboratory test to check if a skin sore is infected with the herpes virus.</td>
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<td>Antiviral</td>
<td>Several antiviral drugs are effective for treating herpes, including aciclovir (acyclovir), valaciclovir, famciclovir, and penciclovir.</td>
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<td>Prodrome</td>
<td>The period of time preceding an outbreak of lesions. Prodromal symptoms may include tingling, itching, and pain. Prodrome may occur as long as several days or as short as a few hours before lesions develop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Herpes Keratitis</td>
<td>A viral infection of the eye caused by the herpes simplex virus.</td>
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Questions to Ask
These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your herpes.

About Symptoms
- What symptoms am I likely to develop?
- How long will symptoms last?

About Causes & Risk Factors
- How did I contract herpes?
- Can you develop herpes without sexual contact?
- How easy is it to spread herpes to someone else?

About Diagnosis
- Which type of herpes do I have?
- What tests were used to make this diagnosis?
- Is there a cure for herpes?
- How often will I experience outbreaks?

About Treatment
- Are there any treatment options?
- Can diet and/or vitamin supplements improve my condition, or keep it from progressing?
- Where do I find support?

About Prevention
- How can I prevent the transmission of herpes?
- Can I spread herpes to my unborn child?